

Message Text

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SUBJECT: COUNCIL OF EUROPE ASSEMBLY SESSION ENDS WITH DEBATE
ON CYPRUS AND MIDDLE EAST QUESTIONS.

1. WINDING UP ITS WEEK LONG MEETING THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE S
PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY DEBATED THE PROBLEMS OF CYPRUS AND THE
MIDDLE EAST ON JANUARY 30. BECAUSE MUCH OF THE ASSEMBLY S
MEMBERSHIP HAD ALREADY DEPARTED, AND BECAUSE THE MEMBERSHIP
RECOGNIZES THE ASSEMBLY S INABILITY TO DO MORE THAN TO URGE
AND ADVISE THE PARTIES TO THE DISPUTE TO SETTLE THEIR
DIFFERENCES, THE DEBATES WERE SOMEWHAT DESULTORY IN CHARACTER.
STILL, THE EXCELLENT REPORT AND DRAFT RESOLUTIONS PREPARED BY
THE KNOWLEDGEABLE AND HARD WORKING AUSTRIAN DEPUTY KARASEK
HAD THE NET EFFECT OF CALLING THE COMPLEXITY AND DIFFICULTY
OF THE CYPRUS AND MIDDLE EAST SITUATION TO THE ATTENTION OF
THE ASSEMBLY MEMBERS, AND OF PERMITTING A COURTEOUS BUT
UNPRODUCTIVE EXCHANGE OF VIEWS AMONG MEMBERS, PARTICULARLY
THE GREEKS AND THE TURKS, ON THESE MATTERS. THE RESOLUTION
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ON CYPRUS - WHICH CONTAINED NOTHING NEW - CALLS FOR DIRECT

NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE TURKISH CYPRIOT AND GREEK CYPRIOT COMMUNITIES IN A DEMILITARIZED CYPRUS , URGES TURKEY AND GREECE TO SUPPORT SUCH EFFORTS, AND CALLS COUNCIL OF EUROPE MEMBERS TO CONTINUE TO GIVE AID TO THE CYPRUS POPULATION AND TO MAKE USE OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE FOR FURTHER EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON THE SUBJECT. THE EXCHANGES BETWEEN GREEK AND TURKISH ASSEMBLY MEMBERS AMOUNTED TO AN UNCHANGING REITERATION OF BOTH SIDES POSITIONS ON THE QUESTION.

2. THE DISCUSSION ON THE ARAB-ISRAELI DISPUTE WAS MORE INTERESTING, SHOWING EVOLUTION ON THE PART OF THE ASSEMBLY TOWARD A MORE FAVORABLE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE PALESTINIANS. ONE WRITTEN DECLARATION SIGNED BY 13 MEMBERS, NOTING THE LINKS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE (ISRAEL HAS OFFICIAL STATUS AT THE COUNCIL), CALLED ON THE COUNCIL TO INITIATE CONTACTS WITHIN THE ARAB WORLD AND WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PALESTINIANS PEOPLE IN PARTICULAR TO SECURE A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE. (COMMENT: AS NOTED IN STRASBOURG 12, EARLIER IN THE SESSION A MUCH LARGER NUMBER OF DELEGATES CALLED FOR A CLOSER RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE COUNCIL AND ISRAEL.)

SOME SPEAKERS DEPLORED THE LACK OF OTHER MIDDLE-EAST OBSERVERS AT THE COUNCIL, AND MANY WARNED THAT UNTIL THE PALESTINIAN EXISTENCE IS RECOGNIZED AND GUARANTEED THERE CAN BE NO PERMANENT SETTLEMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST. SUCH STATEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE BEFORE, BUT THEY WERE MORE FREQUENTLY AND FORCEFULLY STATED AT THIS MEETING, THEREBY SHOWING THE GROWTH OF PRO-PALESTINIAN SENTIMENT WITHIN CERTAIN SEGMENTS OF THE PARLIAMENT OF THE MEMBER STATES. THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE OPPOSITION TO THE ADOPTION OF THE RESOLUTION ON THE MIDDLE EAST WHICH CALLED FOR RECONCILIATION IN LEBANON, DEPLORED THE UN RESOLUTION EQUATING ZIONISM WITH RACISM, AND CALLED FOR CONTINUING DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS TO REACH A SETTLEMENT IN THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT. THE OPPONENTS TO THIS SEEMINGLY INNOCUOUS RESOLUTION APPEARED TO OPPOSE IT NOT BECAUSE THEY WERE AGAINST ITS PROVISIONS, BUT BECAUSE IT DID NOT SUFFICIENTLY RECOGNIZE THE RIGHTS OF PALESTINIANS, EVEN THOUGH THE RESOLUTION STATES THAT THEY MUST HAVE REPRESENTATIVE PARTICIPATION IN ANY SETTLEMENT VALID FOR THE ENTIRE REGION.ROMINE

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